



Town of South Bethany Committee Report from August 21, 2023

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on August 21st at 10:00am at the Town Hall and online Zoom. Members absent were Bob Fisher, Joan Marini and John Roberts.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 7/17/23 meeting.

TC Updates: Tim provided update that Town Council approved the establishment of a new Flood Mitigation committee, with Edie Dondero as Chairperson. More information will be forthcoming including applications to submit interest to be on this new Committee. Discussed having someone from the CWQC on this new Committee makes sense with some of the expected overlaps in issues and focus. Some discussions on the potential scope of the new Committee's focus, but Tim noted that the Route 1 storm water into the Canals will likely stay with the CWQC for example. There will surely be a primary focus around getting more grants too as with this Committee.

Canal Maintenance: Pete provided updates from the sub-committee's first meeting, which included the recommendation to proceed with the contracting with Envirotech for the canal end fall clean-up inclusive of the Floating Wetlands pruning work (discussed below in FW subcommittee updates). Committee reviewed the updated consolidated contract proposed by Envirotech that was provided in advance of meeting, and several items were noted to be added prior to executing: timing in October to better align fall foliage, collection of all the pruned grasses on the floating wetlands to be able to quantify the impact on nutrient collection from the canals, a final pre-work inventory of the floating wetlands and a final inspection by someone from the CWQC upon work completion as part of the sign-off process before final payment would be made. The Committee voted and unanimously approved moving this contract, with required modifications, forward to the Town Council for review and approval. Chris directed to get this updated contract terms communicated to Envirotech and get updated contract to Tim in time for inclusion in the Town Council meeting on 9/8 for consideration and possible action.

Other topics covered included reevaluation of the rain gardens and their maintenance and operation, continuing discussion with Town Council on strengthening the Town Code and enforcement on discharge into the canals, vegetation overhanging or growing out of bulkheads into the canals, etc. Finally, discussion around the need to get a discussion with the Town Manager on establishing a "registration" process for all landscapers who want to perform services in South Bethany. This would include education and information on proper collection and disposal of clippings and other organic matter versus getting into the Canals, along with

guidance on usage of fertilizers, weed treatments and other chemicals harmful to the quality of the Canal water. This program would ideally be mandatory for any contractors that want to do covered work in South Bethany. Further information will be brought forward to the Committee for submission to the Town Council for discussion and possible action at a future meeting. Finally, continued discussion and commitment to reassess the long-term plans for the ongoing Algae maintenance efforts will be brought forward as well.

Code/Communications: No report out, except that the reminder that meeting with the new SBPOA leadership is still being scheduled.

Floating Wetlands (FW): Gary reported that the sub-committee's efforts continue to get general support for the FWs for the overall aesthetics, habitats for fish and birds and some water quality positive impacts. Also confirmed that we need to act now to wrap-up the FW 1.0 pilot program and move to a FW 2.0 initiative. Gary will bring to the next meeting in September this transition plan along with FW 2.0 details.

However as noted above, we need to move forward with the Pruning of the current, viable FWs with the renewed Envirotech contract in finalization. The current inventory from last year's efforts noted 68 mats. The Committee agreed that an updated inventory must be done before the work is started, which will identify specifically which mats to prune, and which need to be removed completely. This will need to take place in September before the work. Agreement by all to continue to align the timing of both the pruning with the canal-ends clean-up at the same time.

Grants: Chris provided read out of subcommittees first meeting. Some great ideas on other grant programs and areas to research. Also, continued agreement that the help of an experienced Grant writer is critical. We will work with the Town Manager to discuss how we can coordinate this along with the newly formed Committee as noted above.

Still awaiting final word on our HMGP grant. Chris updated the Committee that the HMGP workshop was held on 8/1/23 but unfortunately no one from the CWQC was able to attend. The Town Manager did attend, and Chris will follow-up to get any specific highlights.

The Committee did discuss some other initiatives that are possibly good candidates for Grants such as dredging and the US1 stormwater diversion. Discussed the current DelDOT US1 risk mitigation study now underway, and we should see how this might align with our efforts as well. Chris to follow-up with the DelDOT contact he has from prior HMGP meeting. Will report out in future meeting.

Water Quality: Dave provided an update on the continued monitoring efforts and the general conditions of the Canals. Unfortunately, the Canals are not faring well this summer with higher temperatures of the water and much lower dissolved oxygen (DO) levels. The Committee discussed the data collection efforts and our measurement tool, and ability to start to track the presence of Algae. Dave noted that our current equipment does not measure this, but that

there are devices we could purchase that would. He will investigate this, and we will discuss in a future meeting once he has more information.

Other Committee Business: Idea was brought up if we could explore getting some sort of identification or official display like a wearable lanyard that CWQC members could have and use when they are walking around the Town and Canals on official Committee business. There have been occasions when residents would question what someone was doing, and this added “official” recognition would be helpful. This will be discussed with the Town Manager.

Public Comment: Ray Saunders commented on the need to make more information available on the Town's website related to some of the areas discussed during the meeting such as guidance on fertilization and other chemicals, and options that would be more environmentally friendly. The Committee noted that some of this information was being regularly communicated in the Town newsletter along with the SBPOA communications; however, we would look to make sure a more specific set of information is more readily available and organized on the Town's website for all to get to more easily.

The next meeting will be on September 18th at 10:00am as a hybrid – in-person and Zoom. Members of the public are welcome. Reported by Chris Vanuga – Chairman